

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

International Financial Situation Report #55 21 August 1986

Summary

The recent attempt by the Swiss Bank Corporation to substitute interest capitalization for new money in the bridging loan for Mexico highlights the regulatory differences various creditor countries. Some European countries allow tax breaks for loan write offs but not for new loans. The Swiss Bank Corporation's actions on the Mexican loan were unusual as the European banks generally work out their differences in private to avoid giving the debtor the opportunity to divide the banks on important issues. Although the US banks generally take the lead on Latin debt negotiations because of their greater loan exposure, non-US banks collectively hold 65 percent of the LDC debt owed to banks. In other developments:

Mexico's difficulty in securing commercial bank participation in a \$1.6 billion bridge loan indicates a tough road ahead as talks with banks turn to Mexico's \$6 billion new money request. Contrary to some press reports, the level of new lending Mexico is requesting has not been accepted by the bank advisory committee. Brazil is encountering difficulty in completing its 1985-86 commercial debt 0 rescheduling package. 25X1 banks are refusing to sign the accord until Brasilia formalizes its earlier promise 25X1 to guarantee the debts of three failed domestic banks. Argentina may seek interest rate concessions on its foreign debt payments to O compensate for falling wheat prices which it says have been exacerbated by the recent US decision to subsidize wheat sales to the USSR. Buenos Aires is comparing the role played by grain in its economy to that of oil in Mexico, and we believe it may request debt payments be linked to export prices. Surprised by the intensity of bankers' reactions, Venezuela has scrapped its FOCOCAM scheme that would have assumed most of the government-approved foreign debt of the The episode demonstrates the Lusinchi administration's lack of private sector. direction in economic management. The Philippine government concluded a letter of intent with an IMF negotiating team 0 The Philippines has requested 25X1 \$238 million in standby assistance and \$270 million from the Fund's compensatory financing facility. 25X1 NOTE: REPORT #56 WILL BE PUBLISHED ON 18 SEPTEMBER 1986. This situation report was prepared by analysts of the Intelligence Directorate. Comments are welcome and may be addressed to the Situation Report Coordinator, 25X1 25X1 GI M 86-20187C 25X1 Copy 75 of 75 25X1

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KEY ISSUE

Non-US Bank Attitudes Toward LDC Debt Negotiations

The recent attempt by the Swiss Bank Corporation to substitute interest capitalization for new money in the bridging loan for Mexico is another example of the different attitudes expressed by some non-US banks with regard to the LDC debt situation. Although US banks generally take the lead in debt negotiations for the major Latin debtors because of their greater loan exposure, the role of non-US banks is also important because these banks collectively hold some 65 percent of LDC debt owed to banks. Among the major country groups, Japanese banks account for 15-20 percent of LDC bank debt, British banks 15 percent, West German banks 10 percent, and Swiss banks 5 percent, based on various sources. In the case of Mexico, Citibank leads the bank advisory committee while the Swiss Bank Corporation leads the European regional grouping. 25X1 Non-US banks are similar to US banks in that there is often a wide divergence in views among banks in a specific country. Differences occur between large and small banks as well as between large banks with differing exposures in individual countries. 25X1 25X1 The Swiss Bank Corporation's position on the Mexican loan was unusual, however, because the European banks generally work out their differences in private in order to avoid giving the debtor the opportunity to pursue bilateral negotiations. 25X1 The major differences between US and some non-US banks, particularly European banks, are the regulatory regimes. Some European countries allow tax breaks for loan loss provisions. In addition, Spanish, German, and Swiss banks, for example, all have been encouraged by their regulatory authorities to write off portions of their LDC debt, in some cases up to 50 percent, In addition, German banks are not 25X1 required to set aside reserves against capitalized interest payments but would have to do so if new money was committed. US banks do not have the same tax incentives nor have the US regulators required them to set aside major amounts of reserves. Instead, since 1982 US regulators have encouraged US banks to increase capital. 25X1

DEVELOPMENTS IN MAJOR COUNTRIES

Mexico

Last week's difficulty in securing commercial bank participation in a \$1.6 billion bridge loan indicates a tough road lies ahead as talks with the banks turn to Mexico's request for \$6 billion in new money over the next 18 months. Swiss banks posed the greatest threat to the bridging loan, arguing for interest capitalization as an alternative to new lending. Press reports suggest that considerable pressure and an IMF threat to withhold \$1.6 billion in credits to Mexico softened the Swiss position. Nevertheless, banking sources expect the issue to reemerge during negotiations over the new money package, which calls for bank contributions of \$3.5 billion this year and \$2.5 billion in 1987. All banks reportedly are concerned that capitalizing Mexico's interest would set an unwelcome precedent for other troubled debtors.

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of bank participation in new lending. Mexpected to push smaller regional and Europtheir 1982 exposure, even though many of the	setting of a base date to determine the level lexico's bank advisory committee (BAC) is ean banks to lend an amount proportionate to nese banks have since written off or swapped re from larger banks will force most of the
regional banks to lan in me,	government-to-
government pressure may be required to be line.	ring some of the larger European banks into
Meanwhile, the economic subcommitted reconcile Mexico's new money request wofficials.	ee of the BAC apparently has been unable to with economic data presented by Mexican
of new lending Mexico is requesting has not tions are likely to remain deadlocked until BAC. Once there is agreement on the Mexico's new money package is likely to be	Contrary to some press reporting, the level yet been accepted by the banks, and negotiathe subcommittee presents its report to the level of lending, we believe completion of months off—certainly beyond 8 September,
when the IMF is scheduled to formally accept	ot Mexico's program.
Brazil	`,
rescheduling package. The deadline for obt of its creditor banks was pushed forward to	banks still are refusing to sign the
domestic banks. Brazilian officials have income be resolved by 5 September,	promise to guarantee the debts of three failed dicated to bankers that the issue is unlikely to
negotiations to limit external debt service	payments to 2.5 percent of GDP next year—iffort to support planned domestic growth of Subsequently, Brasilia issued a press
track. Nevertheless, some creditors believe	order to keep its current rescheduling on Brazil will use this goal to justify substantial Other lenders e of Brazil's healthy payments position and
investment funds will be sorely needed. capital formation in Brazil, we expect Bramoney or eased interest payments—in the nexpected to begin in October. Moreover, we	wth, most economists indicate that additional With the Cruzado Plan weakening domestic izilian officials to push for concessions—new ext round of talks with commercial creditors, we believe Brasilia will remain steadfast in its MF program as a prerequisite for a debt
Argentina	
Argentina is likely to begin negotia agreement, according to a US government of	tions with the IMF soon on a new standby official. Buenos Aires may seek interest rate
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concessions on its foreign debt payments as well as \$250 million from the IMF compensatory financing facility to compensate for falling grain prices, according to press reports. The Argentines will probably claim export revenue problems were exacerbated by the recent US decision to subsidize wheat sales to the USSR. In addition, Argentina is publicly comparing the role played by grain in its economy to that of oil in Mexico, and we believe it may request that its foreign financing be linked to agriculture export prices. Negotiations are likely to be complicated by the fact that monthly inflation hit 6.8 percent in July and is expected to reach 7.8 percent this month.

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REGIONAL SITUATIONS

Latin America

In Latin America, the IMF declared Peru ineligible to draw on Fund resources, Venezuela scrapped its FOCOCAM plan. Cuba resumed making partial interest payments,

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Peru

The IMF declared Peru ineligible to draw on Fund resources when Lima failed to clear arrearages by the 15 August deadline. President Garcia used the IMF declaration of Peru's ineligibility as occasion for a one hour speech in which he castigated the Fund and sought to increase popular support for his debt stance. Garcia did not threaten any radical debt action, and we do not expect any since Peru is interested in maintaining access to other credits. In more measured tones to the press, Central Bank head Figueroa has stated that Peru still has access to some \$1 billion in credit lines already in process from the IBRD and the Inter-American Development Bank and that Lima intends to hold talks with commercial banks and creditor governments.

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O HOLO TATAS WITH COMMERCIAL DANKS AND CLEUTION POVERHIMENES.

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Garcia

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probably will continue to depict the IMF as unresponsive to the developing countries as he maneuvers to gain the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for Peru during 1989-1992 when he attends the NAM summit in Harare, Zimbabwe early next month.

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Venezuela

The Lusinchi administration has scrapped its plan to assume most of the government-approved foreign debt of the private sector. The FOCOCAM scheme, passed by congress last month, was intended to provide balance-of-payments relief and to raise revenues to cover next year's fiscal deficit. Although foreign creditor banks favored the government's assumption of the private sector's debt servicing responsibilities, they strongly opposed the below-market interest rate and were concerned by the long maturity the bonds were to carry. According to the Embassy, bankers told Venezuelan finance ministry officials that negotiations to reschedule the public debt could not resume until the government found a satisfactory solution for the private debt. To underscore their dissatisfaction, some banks reportedly cut trade credit lines. Surprised by the intensity of bank reaction, the administration scrapped the bond scheme. The fiasco with the private debt scheme has increased tensions with banks, giving the

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	political opposition another chance to rail against Lusinchi's uncertain economic management and in our judgment is likely to further depress investor confidence.	
	According to the US Embassy, the government now plans to manage the impact of private debt service on the balance of payments by restricting access to preferential exchange-rate dollars to those debtors who secure a five-year grace period on principal repayments from their foreign creditors. Official debt and debts of less than \$500,000 will be exempted from the 5-year grace period requirement. In addition, we believe that the government may reduce the interest spread above LIBOR that is used to calculate central bank dollar disbursements for servicing private debtors' interest obligations. To cover the government's 1987 fiscal deficit—a projected eight percent of GDP—the administration is considering legislation that would allow the central bank to increase significantly its holdings of treasury debt, according to press accounts. Because such a move would sharply raise the money supply, some Venezuelan analysts have expressed concern over its inflationary impact.	25>
		25 X
	Cuba	
	After suspending all payments on short-term commercial debt on 1 July, the Cuban National Bank has resumed partial interest payments and informed creditors that delays in payment are the result of a shortage of foreign exchange.	25X
	Cuba has asked Western banks to provide \$300 million in new money, reschedule \$100 million in commercial debt falling due in 1986, and to reschedule the country's already-rescheduled 1982 and 1983 principal and interest payments, according to press	25X 25X
	reporting.	25X 25X
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USSR/Eastern Europe			
Western financial mark	ern Bloc countries, the USS kets, and Yugoslavia will pro lly putting it in default on its	bably miss its third qu	arter targets
USSR			
The USSR, in its shortfall, is expanding financial markets.	continuing effort to mitiga ties with Western banks a	te the effects of its hand trying out new opt	nard currency ions in world
			Moscow
Moreover, in early A denominated bond issue month's agreement with	ly put together, for the fir ugust, Vneshtorgbank agreed e, marking the first entry of the ch Great Britain on tsarist bo ent to issuance of Soviet bond	d to invest \$3.2 milli the USSR into the bond onds in default since 19	ance facility. on in a yen- market. Last
in joining the IMF, the observers believe the international credit mexternal financing act	seminar with US economists, and IBRD, and other internat Soviets hope that such membershets. While the USSR privities, this growth will be financial markets get out of	ional financial agencie bership would make it robably will continue t tempe <u>red by an u</u> nwilli	s. Financial easier to tap to expand its
Yugoslavia			
financing gap of \$600 with Western creditors forced to seek addition obligations next year. will miss its third-quaragreement,		ption of its rescheduling improves, Yugoslavian the West to meet its Belgunder the IMF enhance to meet the target wou	g agreements also may be debt service rade probably d monitoring ld technically
and reduce its ability government continues t the domestic economy	ult on its 1985-88 rescheduling to secure needed trade conto largely ignore IMF policy rand trade performance, the act with official creditors and part of the secure of t	redits. Moreover, if ecommendations design ctivation of the goodwil	the Yugoslaved to improve l clause of its
Asia			
	ippines concluded a draft let nesia claims it will reexamine		
Philippines			
The Philippine of negotiating team in late	government concluded a dr te July,		with an IMF tter of intent
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was submitted in early August to IMF Managing Director de Larosiere for his approval. According to press reports, the Philippines has requested \$238 million in standby assistance and \$270 million from the Fund's compensatory financing facility. Under the new standby, Manila has agreed to restructure or dismantle some troubled governmentowned financial institutions-likely including the Philippine National Bank. Manila also has agreed to liberalize certain trade policies including lowering tariff barriers.

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Talks between the Philippines and its bank advisory committee are expected to begin as soon as the IMF Executive Board approves the letter of intent. Press reports indicate Manila will seek a multiyear commercial bank rescheduling covering debts of \$3.5 billion falling due from 1987 through 1991. A request for another new money facility is not anticipated. Negotiations with Paris Club creditors for a rescheduling of approximately \$1.6 billion in official debts are likely to take place in October for November.

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During her upcoming visit to the United States, President Aquino will seek commercial bankers' support for the recently announced Philippine debt-to-equity conversion plan. To begin buying up discounted loans and converting them into equity in Philippine enterprises, Manila needs to raise \$250 million, which Aquino will seek from bankers during her visit. According to press reports, bankers, while supporting the plan in principle, are already saying the conversion fees being charged by the government are too high.

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Indonesia

Indonesian Central Bank officials recently indicated Jakarta does not plan to "readjust" the country's external debt this year despite the sharp reduction in its export revenues due to lower oil prices. However, they do expect to "re-examine" their debt situation closely after the April 1987 preliminary elections. Indonesia-which had nearly \$13 billion in foreign exchange reserves in January 1986—has drawn down its reserves by \$2-3 billion as of last month to help finance its deficits,

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Jakarta may be trying to utilize short-term trade credits to conserve foreign exchange reserves. Given its current level of reserves, Indonesia should be able to postpone a rescheduling until after the April elections.

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unless the price of oil rises above \$20 per barrel, the specter of a rescheduling is unavoidable.

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For their part, Indonesia's commercial creditors are rethinking their ceilings on Indonesian exposure. According to US Embassy reporting, Japanese banks, which had increased their exposure from \$992 million in 1982 to \$2.2 billion in 1985, have become concerned about the state of the Indonesian economy and may take steps to reduce their exposure. There are indications, however, that the Japanese government through its official assistance program will pick up any slack caused by Japanese commercial bank Indonesia may try to obtain a large syndicated retrenchment. loan from commercial creditors, but response is expected to be lukewarm unless generous terms are granted. Nine moneycenter banks hold 80-85 percent of US commercial bank

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Africa	/Middle East
	Nigeria has drafted preliminary guidelines for a two-
	oreign exchange market; and Tunisia is expected to reach an agreement with the or a new standby next month.
1	Egypt
	
	Jainely primary concern remains the Funds recommendation that the country
decont the pri	Cairo's primary concern remains the Fund's recommendation that the country trol its multiple exchange rates within one year, which—because it would double ices of essential imports—Egyptian officials believe would be certain to ignite civil. Cairo insists it needs three years to gradually decontrol exchange rates. We be a gradually decontrol exchange rates.
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decont the pri unrest expect	trol its multiple exchange rates within one year, which—because it would double ices of essential imports—Egyptian officials believe would be certain to ignite civil. Cairo insists it needs three years to gradually decontrol exchange rates. We Egypt will redouble its efforts toward softer IMF terms in coming weeks;
ine princest. Expect Delieve accord ncreas	trol its multiple exchange rates within one year, which—because it would double ices of essential imports—Egyptian officials believe would be certain to ignite civil. Cairo insists it needs three years to gradually decontrol exchange rates. We
decont the princest. inrest. expect	Meanwhile, Cairo plans to announce major customs reforms on 22 August which it es will boost government revenue by some \$600 million over the next year, ling to US Embassy reporting. The IMF and World Bank, however, estimate the sed revenues at \$400 million. Implementation of the reforms would clear the way
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decont the princest expect	Meanwhile, Cairo plans to announce major customs reforms on 22 August which it es will boost government revenue by some \$600 million over the next year, ling to US Embassy reporting. The IMF and World Bank, however, estimate the sed revenues at \$400 million. Implementation of the reforms would clear the way sbursement of the \$110 million cash portion of the US bilateral aid program. Nigeria Nigeria Nigerian officials have drafted preliminary guidelines for a two-tier foreign age market, but President Babangida privately acknowledged that he cannot accept

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inability to protect military benefits,	but we	25X
believe key officers are likely to remain loyal at least through the near term.		25X

Tunisia

IMF staff told US officials last week they are confident that Tunisia—hard-hit this year by low oil and tourism revenues, a poor harvest, and sagging commodity prices—will reach agreement with the Fund on conditions for a standby arrangement during talks next month. The Fund accord would provide Tunis with about \$180 million, including a \$140 million compensatory facility, before yearend, but IMF staff confirmed the country will face a tight financial squeeze until Fund and World Bank disbursements are made. Even with the expected Fund and Bank cash infusions, the IMF estimates Tunisia still faces a \$350 million financial gap this year, which would have to be covered by bilateral donors, new commercial loans, or debt rescheduling. Tunis prefers to fill the gap with bilateral assistance, but so far requests for help from Europe have yielded only about \$15 million in additional aid, according to the US Embassy.

FINANCIAL BRIEFS

International

o	At the G-77 meeting this week, Romania proposed a writeoff of much of the \$800 billion Third World debtRomanians suggested the debts of those LDCs whose per capita income does not exceed \$500-600 dollars be cancelledthe debts of LDCs with per capita incomes between \$1000-2000 would be substantially reduced.	25X1
Americas		
o	Bolivia is to begin negotiations on its \$930 million commercial bank debt this weekbankers willing to reschedule if La Paz pays \$50 million this yeardrawdown of reserves spurred by joint US-Bolivian anti-narcotics action makes such payment unlikely.	25 X 1
0	Colombia returned to the international bond market after a 14-year absencesuccessfully placed \$40 million bond issue with Japanese investorsrapid, positive response indicates strengthened creditworthiness.	25X1
		23/1
O	Costa Rica proposing to link debt service payments to economic performance when it meets with creditor banks in Novemberwill seek renegotiation of San Jose's \$1.6 billion commercial debt, interest rate concessionscontinuing to renegotiate terms and conditions for a new IMF standby, but new program unlikely before end 1986.	25X1
o	Ecuador obtained a \$75 million IMF standby arrangement on 15 August implemented a floating foreign exchange rate for private sector transactions and eliminated interest rate ceilingsalso signed agreement with commercial creditors to reschedule the 1986 portion of its \$5.5 billion multiyear rescheduling over 12 years at 1.375 percentage points above LIBOR.	25 X 1
o	Paraguay agreed to accept World Bank disbursements—delayed due to Asuncion's refusal to devalue—at half their previous amountplans to use Central Bank reserves to make up differencewe judge Asuncion has insufficient reserves to both service foreign debt and cover the disbursement shortfall.	25X1
o	Uruguay's legislature voted to substantially raise government pensionscould cause Montevideo to miss fiscal deficit and monetary targets of its IMF-supported programmissed targets would delay over \$100 million in IMF, World Bank, and commercial loans.	25X1

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